

# CARNUEL/WEST TIJERAS PLAN 2006

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BERNALILLO COUNTY





## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Carnuel/West Tijeras Plan serves as a community scale plan through which Bernalillo County can effectively implement the goals of the East Mountain Area Plan (EMAP) and address community goals and recommendations regarding the future of residential, commercial, open space, infrastructure, and environmental conditions within the plan boundaries. The plan includes information about the current land use conditions and focuses on specific planning issues and recommendations that have been refined from the EMAP, the general policy guide for the East Mountains that aims to balance development with the natural and social environment.

### Plan Area

The Carnuel/West Tijeras area encompasses the greater Carnuel community, Echo Canyon Estates, the Monticello neighborhood, the Coyote Springs Tract, and the West Tijeras area including the undeveloped tracts of land in the western portion of Carnuel and just east of the municipal limits of Albuquerque. The plan area is bounded on the west by the east boundary of the City of Albuquerque, to the east by the underpass of Highway 333 at I-40 known as Dead Man's Curve, to the south by the U.S. Forest Service lands near Coyote Springs and to the north by the Sandia Wilderness (See Map on page 6).



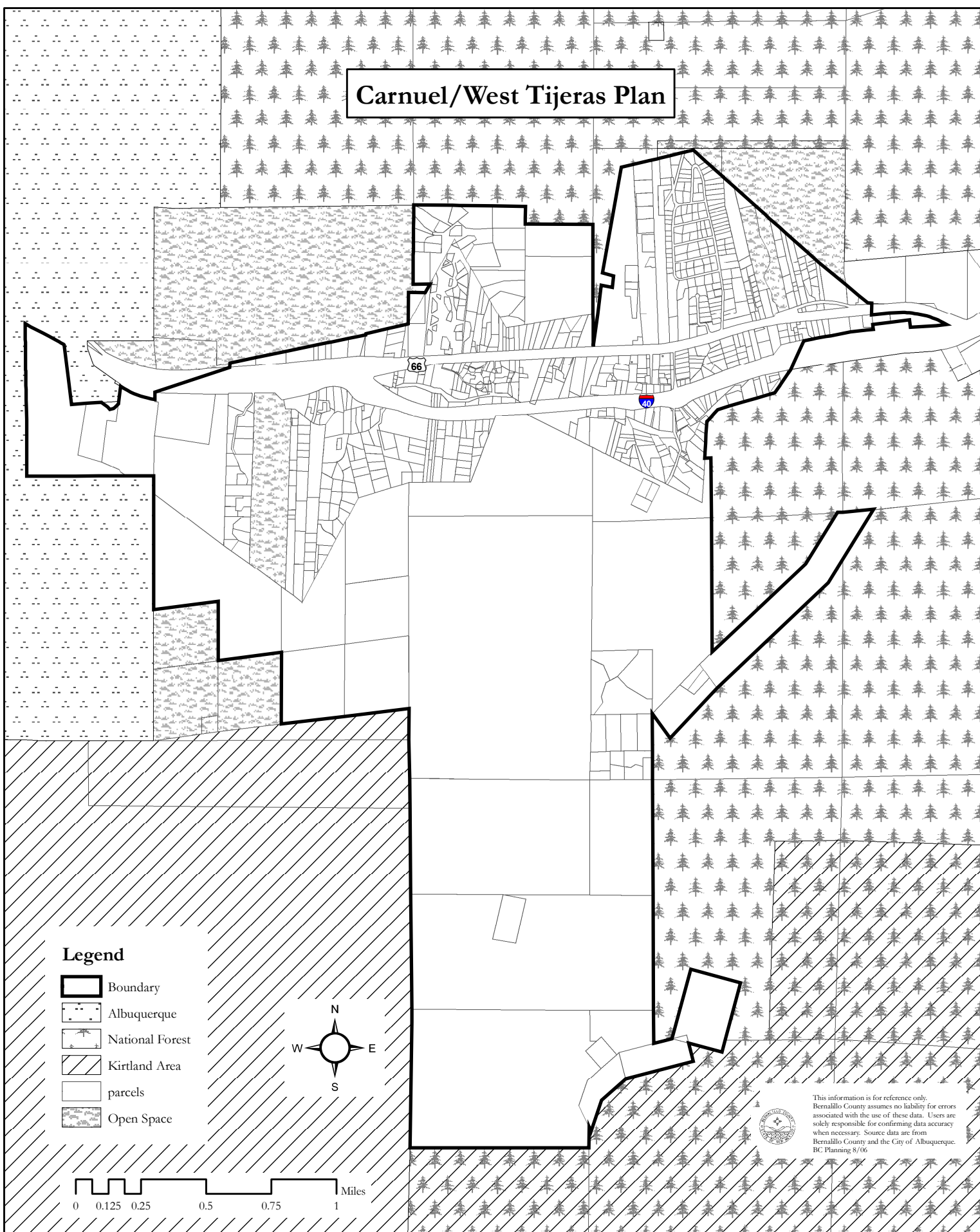
Community Planning Session, January 7, 2006. Photo by James M. Aranda

### Plan Process

The Carnuel/West Tijeras Plan process began in October 2005 and included two community meetings. These two meetings were held on October 26<sup>th</sup> and December 6<sup>th</sup> at Los Vecinos Community Center. The purpose and intent of the plan was presented to community members and existing conditions of the plan area were discussed.

The basis of the plan was developed in an all day planning session on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2006. This session included participation from approximately 60 residents and County staff from the Zoning, Environmental Health and Public Works Offices who identified the development issues, goals and recommendations used to draft this plan.

# Carnuel/West Tijeras Plan



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## History

In 1763, Spanish colonial governor of New Mexico Tomas Vellez Gachupín ordered that a permanent settlement be established in the Sandia Mountains east of the Villa de Albuquerque for the purpose of developing a defensive buffer between the Spanish settlement and nomadic tribes. In the early 1700s, the Pueblo and Hispanic settlements of the valley had experienced frequent attacks by nomadic bands of Native Americans. A plan was developed to move landless *genizaros* (Hispanicized Indians) and mestizos to the canyon in the mountains for land distribution and defense. Due to continued attacks, the settlement was difficult to sustain and experienced periods of abandonment and resettlement. The communities in the Carnue Land Grant are the oldest continually inhabited communities in the Sandia Mountain range. In 1817, the children and grandchildren of the area's original settlers, and other landless mestizos and mixed castes were allowed to return to the Cañon de Carnue to build permanent settlements and reorganize farm plots and communal land holdings. In 1819, the Cañon de Carnue was re-issued as a community land grant known as San Miguel de Laredo de Carnue. The village included a defensible plaza and various acequias throughout the study area (U.S. Forest Ranger District, Heritage Report No.2002-03-008).

After the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed between the United States and Mexico, ending the U.S. - Mexican War, the United States was obligated to establish courts in which to adjudicate the lands held by Mexican citizens. After a 40-year court proceeding, the U.S. court issued an order reducing the 90,000 acre claim of the Carnue Land Grant to 2,000 acres which excluded the historical communal lands and reduced the community's size to only the private tracts allotted to individual families.

For much of the early 1900s, the built environment was primarily typified by rock and adobe single family housing structures with high-density family compounds surrounded by corrals and small gardens. The dominant land use within the land grant's common lands was goat herding. This land use pattern continued until the 1940s when the increase in commercial use along Historic Route 66 led to the development of a number of roadside hotels and gas stations. In this same decade, new residential developments were built, known as Echo Canyon Estates and the Monticello neighborhood further transforming the historic community. The construction of I-40 in the 1950s significantly fragmented the community. The interstate's presence increased traffic through Tijeras Canyon and split the north side of Carnuel, Monticello, and Echo Canyon from Coyote Springs and the Santa Niño Church on the south side.

Today the communities within the plan area continue to enjoy a rural atmosphere despite encroachment of urban development. Since the early 1990s, new development has taken place in the southwest portions of the plan area. Subdivisions, have also been platted and developed on the western portion of the plan boundary referred to as West Tijeras.. The land use patterns in the Carnuel area and Acequia Madre/Coyote Springs neighborhood can be defined as a high-density traditional Hispanic community development on lots less than one acre in size. This district primarily includes residential manufactured housing on the south side of I-40 as well as site





built housing in newly developed subdivisions directly south of the Santo Niño church. The plan area also has a few large tracts of undeveloped land south of the Acequia Madre/Coyote Springs neighborhood and in the subarea locally referred to as West Tijeras. Small-scale commercial uses are sparsely spread along Historic Route 66.

### **Demographics**

According to the US Census Bureau, the Carnuel/West Tijeras Plan area consists of approximately 1,474 residents that occupy approximately 646 homes. Since 2000, there was very little new construction in the plan area. Approximately 44% of the households in the plan area are residents who live alone and approximately 66% of the residents are family households. There is an average of 2.32 persons per household, which is higher than the East Mountain area (2.02 persons per household) as a whole, and is closer to the average number of persons per household within Bernalillo County which is 2.37 per household (East Mountain Area Plan 2006). The median age in the plan area is 42.5. 63.6% of the area's population is between the ages of 18-64 which is similar to the 60% for the East Mountain area as a whole. The median family income in the plan area is \$46,250, which is comparable to the entire East Mountain area; however the percentage of people in Carnuel below the poverty level is 12.3% which is significantly higher than the East Mountains where only 6.65% of the population is living below the poverty level. In fact, Carnuel is similar to the percentage of persons living in poverty in Bernalillo County as a whole which is 13.7%. The plan area has a significant Hispanic population, which is approximately 60% of the total population of the study area. (U.S. Census Bureau 2000, Carnuel CDP, estimates of existing homes in Census Tracts 3807 and 3806 which are primarily south of I-40)

## **II. NATURAL RESOURCES**

The following section provides general information about the environment and natural resource conditions in the Carnuel/West Tijeras Plan area. It will assist in guiding future land use, transportation, open space, infrastructure improvements, and more importantly to develop strategies to enhance the environment. According to the East Mountain Area Plan, major issues were water availability and quality, fire danger, wildlife, open space, and clean air. The goals and recommendations presented later will address how to maintain the rural character, control erosion, mitigate drainage issues, and reduce pollution including light and noise pollution.

### **Soils**

Soils include the alluvium of Tijeras Arroyo which contains beds comprised of sandstone, gneiss, limestone, and granite. Much of the areas soils derived from Tijeras Canyon, but areas of bedrock and resulting weathered gravel also exist throughout the plan area. These areas, also known as Orthids soils typically occur where bedrock materials are limestone, sandstone, or schist and have been exposed at the surface. These soils are typically thin to very thin, and contain large amounts of oversized materials. There is little to